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AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT
INCORPORATED

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FOGG ART MUSEUM

CAMBRIDGE 38, MASSACHUSETTS

Newsletter Number One

May 15, 1951

Mr. Carl T. Keller
80 Federal Street
Boston 10, Massachusetts

Dear Member:

Since you received my last letter, the American Research Center has become an actuality in Cairo. And you will be pleased to have news of certain important developments on this side.

At the Annual Meeting held on November 21, 1950, at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, seventy-seven members were present or represented by proxy. Certain amendments to the By-laws in accord with the sense of proposals submitted to you in the notice of the meeting were voted by repealing the old By-laws and inserting in place of them a Code embodying these changes. If you wish, a copy of the amended By-laws will be sent you.

The officers whose names you see above were also elected; and for the benefit of our new members and contributors I append a list of our Trustees.

With very great regret I had to report the loss by death of three of our members: Edward Jackson Holmes, Joseph Lindon Smith, our first Life-member, and Thomas Whittemore. The following minute was by vote incorporated in the record of the meeting:

"The Members of the American Research Center in Egypt, in meeting assembled, record their sense of deep regret for the loss by



death of three of the Center's founders: Edward Jackson Holmes (1873 - 1950), Joseph Lindon Smith (1863 - 1950), and Thomas Whittemore (1871 - 1950). By recognizing the importance to international scholarship, and through it to international understanding and fellowship, of the goals toward which the Center hoped to progress, these men helped from the beginning to bring to life and functional activity a hope and an idea which they deemed worthy of their support. In recognition of their services to the initial establishment of the Center and with regret that they can no longer observe and support its future development, this expression of affection and regard is made part of the minutes of the meeting."

Mr. Mark Wellington Sloane of New Haven, Connecticut, who served in Egypt during the War and has travelled extensively in the Near East, had volunteered his help to our Cairo office for a nominal remuneration; and the feeling of the meeting that this generous offer should be accepted has been ratified by Director W. S. Smith, who appointed Mr. Sloane Administrative Officer for the Center at Cairo.

At the time of the meeting the Assistant Treasurer reported a cash balance of \$1,410.19. Today we have a balance of \$1,654.74, and an account of our receipts and expenditures will be sent you with our next Newsletter, covering our first year of active operation.

Our membership now includes 82 Regular, 17 Contributing, nine Sustaining, two Associate, and three Life Members (not including the Life Membership of Joseph Lindon Smith), and two Fellowships.

It gives me great pleasure to report, and you will be no less pleased to learn, that on March 28, 1951, the U. S. Treasury Department provisionally ruled that the Center be tax-exempt for the purpose of Federal Income Taxes on its income, and for the purpose of deduction

for contributions made to the Center by donors under Federal Income Tax Law, Gift Tax Law, and Estate Tax Law.

Activities in Cairo were inaugurated by the arrival of our fellow-member Dr. Richard Ettinghausen of the Freer Gallery, Washington, D. C., who had been appointed a staff-member of the Center during his stay by Director W. S. Smith. He gave our first lectures, speaking on Fatimid Painting and on Animal Decoration in Islamic Art to audiences invited by our Cairo Advisory Committee. More formal installation of the Center dates from the arrival of the Director, Dr. W. S. Smith of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and Mr. Sloane. Dr. Smith sends the following report:

29 April 1951

To the Members of the American Research Center in Egypt:

The Center has now been in operation in Cairo for nearly two months and the Director begs to submit a preliminary report. The Director and the Administrative Officer, Mr. Mark Wellington Sloane, arrived in Alexandria on 4 March. Mr. Sloane joined the EXETER in Naples after stopping a few days in England. In London he was able to see a number of Museum and University people interested in Egypt as well as other persons, such as Sir Ronald Storrs, who have been long concerned with this part of the world. He discussed with them the plans of the Center, eliciting sympathetic response on all sides.

In Cairo, the Director has taken up residence in Mena House Hotel at the foot of the hill on which lie the Giza Pyramids, which is unusually convenient for his work at Giza and Saqqara. It is less than a half hour's drive to Saqqara now along a dike road which takes one close to a whole range of Old Kingdom sites: Zawiyet El Aryan, Abu Gurab and Abusir; as well as bringing one into closer contact with the life in the villages along the way. It is worth the trouble of patiently negotiating a car between the water buffaloes and herds of sheep and goats to see this stretch of country in the dusk when the villagers are bringing their cattle home from the fields at the end of the day. As always, one is struck by the sharp contrast between the fertile green valley and the desert edge with its ancient tombs, as well as the way in which life goes on in these little villages so close to busy, modern Cairo.

The Center has been lent a small office in the Library of the United States Offices of Information and Educational Exchange. While this can be viewed only as a temporary expedient until the Center has sufficient funds to provide itself with suitable quarters, we are

properly grateful for the hospitality offered us which gives us for the present an address as 6 Sharia Sheikh Barakat, Garden City, Cairo.

We have met with the friendliest reception everywhere, especially from officials in the Antiquities Department. Mr. Robert S. Black, Cultural Attaché at the U. S. Embassy and Chairman of our Cairo Advisory Committee, called a meeting of our Advisory Committee toward the end of March after the Director's return from Luxor where he spent a week at Chicago House, Field Headquarters of the Oriental Institute Epigraphic Expedition of the University of Chicago. It was proposed that the Center should sponsor a lecture by Dr. Richard A. Parker, your Membership Secretary, during his stay in Cairo on his return from Luxor to America. Dr. Parker, Wilbour Professor of Egyptology at Brown University, talked on "The Star Clocks of Ancient Egypt" on April 17th to an audience of over a hundred persons in the U.S.I.E. Hall and tea was offered to the guests. The invitations served as an announcement of the inauguration of the Center and we have every reason to feel gratified at the enthusiastic response prompted by this, the first of our activities. Invitations have been issued for an illustrated lecture by the Director on "The Royal Household of the Mother of Cheops, A Great Lady of the Pyramid Age". This will be on the 2nd of May. In spite of the delightful weather so far, it will soon be very hot and this is probably the last time this spring that an audience can be collected before people begin going away for the summer. It is evident that such lectures are welcome in Cairo, both from the response to Mr. Parker's talk and to that on Persian art which Dr. Richard Ettinghausen was kind enough to give last winter before our arrival.

The Center has been recognized as an organization to which Fulbright Grantees may be affiliated. The Director has so far approved acceptance of two applicants, one from the University of Oregon who wishes to study Egyptian sculpture as a background for modern creative work and the other, a composer from the University of Indiana, who plans to study the music of Egypt, again as a basis for creative work. This seems a practical application of the principle that the study of ancient things should have some permanent value in present day life.

It is pleasant to be able to report that Mr. W. K. Simpson of the Egyptian Department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art has been able to join us for three weeks. He has just arrived from Iraq where he has been excavating at Nimrud with the English excavator, Professor Max Mallowan. It will be possible for him to get a first hand knowledge of three very interesting digs at present in progress at Helwan, Dahshur and Giza. He will be able to see Giza and Saqqara thoroughly as well as the Museums in Cairo. Although it will now be very hot in Upper Egypt, it should be possible for him to see the monuments at Luxor fairly comfortably, although excavating there will have closed down. But we shall make his visit to Egypt as profitable as possible.

The Director has had the benefit of two weeks discussion with Richard Parker during his stay here at the hotel and while they were visiting together the Cairo Museum and archaeological sites in the Cairo region. He has also gained much from talks with Sir Alan Gardiner, Dean of British Egyptologists, with Peter Shinnie, the Commissioner of Archaeology in the Sudan, and members of the Egypt Exploration Society.

working at Saqqara. He has also been able to discuss the future of the Center with Dr. George Hughes, Field Director of the Epigraphic Section of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, who has consented to become a staff member of the Center. He has visited the newly opened Swiss Institute and the long established French Institute. These institutions, as well as the museums and libraries in Cairo, provide wonderful working materials for the visiting scholar. In Luxor and in the Cairo region, the Director has again been forcibly impressed by the immense quantities of material that still require study, recording and, above all, publication. Much of this is newly excavated but everywhere are the signs of the great burden of responsibility that has rested upon a relatively small number of scholars who have long struggled to make these immensely interesting things available to the world. It is oppressively evident how much we need to train young people to help lighten this burden.

The Director is at present working single handed at checking for publication the records of the great Giza Cemetery, now in the charge of Dr. Abdel Monem Abubakr, and is also helping to record some extremely important royal reliefs at Saqqara which have lain for twenty years waiting for someone to find the time to deal with them. It is hoped that some joint form of publication can be arranged between several interested scholars. At Karnak, the Second Pylon has recently produced some 4,000 blocks of reliefs of the Amarna Age, with scenes and inscriptions of the utmost importance. It is calculated that this is about half the number of blocks that were used as filling when this pylon was constructed from the debris of a temple of Akhenaten. At Helwan, an Egyptian excavator, Zaki Saad, has now uncovered 8,000 Early Dynastic tombs of the most vital importance for the beginnings of Egyptian history. At Dahshur, a little temple has just been discovered at the base of the Bent Pyramid of Sneferu, the first king of the Fourth Dynasty. This is part of a project for the study of Old Kingdom pyramids which was initiated by the late Abdessallam Husein, one of the Center's enthusiastic supporters whom many members will remember speaking at its first meeting in May 1948. This project is now being energetically taken up by Ahmed Fakhry.

These are only examples taken at random from a variety of important activities in progress throughout the country. It is obvious that it is impossible for a student to follow these new developments without having an opportunity to visit the country. The idea grows in one's mind that the buried treasures of this country must be of a nature to challenge in value those already familiar to us in such abundance. There is a suggestion here of how much could be done by small, carefully planned excavations on the part of Americans working in conjunction with our Egyptian colleagues. There is no doubt that we also have a responsibility which we should fulfill in helping to record the vast number of monuments already above ground which have long needed attention.

It has so far been possible only to touch upon a part of the field in which the Center proposes to interest itself. There remain the Coptic monuments, the Hellenistic and Roman remains and Egypt's Islamic heritage. I should like to close by quoting from a statement of the aims of the Center which has been prepared for distribution here

in Cairo:

"The Founders of the American Research Center in Egypt have felt strongly that without some clear idea of the past it is impossible to understand present day problems. The Center has grown out of the idea that more vigorous encouragement should be given to the study of Egyptian civilization, both in the present as well as in the past. To avoid narrow specialization a student should be able to have first hand knowledge of the monuments of the past in this country as well as its present day life. Equally important is the opportunity for him to discuss his problems with his Egyptian colleagues. Such friendly contact can be of inestimable benefit on both sides. The main aim of the Center is to provide such contacts between students of Egyptian civilization.

"The present Director of the Center, William Stevenson Smith, is an Egyptologist. The Trustees hope to choose as each annual director a specialist in one of the main phases of Egyptian history. The Center proposes to encourage advanced students who are capable of undertaking independent research in Egypt whether along the line of historical studies or in some creative capacity in the arts, with particular emphasis upon close contact between American and Egyptian scholars. The Center also intends, from time to time, to sponsor lectures which should appeal to all those interested in the history of Egyptian civilization.

"The Center now has a membership which represents a wide range of activities in the United States. It was formally established at a meeting in Boston in 1948 and incorporated under the laws of the State of Massachusetts in 1950. The Cairo Office of the Center is presently located at No. 6 Sharia Sheikh Barakat, Garden City. The Administrative Officer of the Center, Mark Wellington Sloane, will be glad to answer inquiries concerning the activities of the Center."

(SIGNED) Wm. Stevenson Smith

I think you will agree that we have got off to a good start in Cairo. Our Membership Secretary, Professor Richard A. Parker of Brown University, has just returned from Egypt, and in our next Newsletter we hope to send you some account by him of his activities there.

It has been thought well by your Executive Committee not to request the renewal of annual dues till the date of the next Annual Meeting in November, though any special contributions before then will be specially welcome. We must rent independent office space as soon as we can; and we should make some return for the services so generously

volunteered by our Administrative Officer.

Yours very sincerely,

Edward W. Forbes

Edward W. Forbes
President

List of Trustees

I. Term 19 May 1950 - 30 November 1951
(immediate re-election for five years thereafter not being excluded)

Edwin B. Allen
Ludlow Bull
Carleton S. Coon
Willard V. King
Mrs. Joseph Lindon Smith

II. Term 19 May 1950 - 30 November 1952
(immediate re-election for five years thereafter not being excluded)

Robert Woods Bliss
John D. Cooney
Dows Dunham
Edward W. Forbes
Harry Starr

III. Term 19 May 1950 - 30 November 1953
(immediate re-election for five years thereafter not being excluded)

Sterling Dow
Frederick Foster
Mortimer Graves
George C. Keiser
Carl T. Keller

IV. Term 19 May 1950 - 30 November 1954
(immediate re-election for five years thereafter not being excluded)

William Y. Elliott
Richard A. Parker
Froelich G. Rainey
C. Bradford Welles
John A. Wilson

V. Term 19 May 1950 - 30 November 1955
(immediate re-election for five years thereafter not being excluded)

Edwin E. Calverley
Arthur Jeffrey
Ambrose Lansing
Enoch E. Peterson
William Phillips